



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Understanding and preventing bullying related to the protected characteristics

A lesson plan for Key Stage 2



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Overview

Through two whole group discussions and three small group activities this lesson will explore issues of bullying related to protected characteristics. It is important to explore and understand all of the pre-reading before delivering this lesson, as it sets the context and some baseline knowledge and understanding, as well as providing ideas for how to facilitate discussion of potentially sensitive topics. It is also necessary to have the means to play a short film.

Key stage

This lesson plan is suitable for use at either Key Stage 2.

Links to the curriculum for Key Stage 2

This lesson can contribute to a wide range of areas within the personal and social education (PSE) curriculum. It contributes to thinking and communication skills as well as to the following content range.

- **Active citizenship**
 - Develop respect for themselves and others.
 - Understand situations which produce conflict and the nature of bullying.
 - Understand how injustice and inequality affect people's lives.
- **Health and emotional well-being**
 - Feel positive about themselves and be sensitive towards the feelings of others.
 - Understand the range of their own and others' feelings and emotions.
 - Understand what to do or to whom to go when feeling unsafe.
- **Moral and spiritual development**
 - Understand that personal actions have consequences.
- **Working with others**
 - Resist unwanted peer pressure and behaviour.
 - Empathise with others' experiences and feelings.
 - Manage different emotions and develop strategies to resolve conflict and deal with bullying.
 - Ask for personal support and advice.

Preparation

Time

60 minutes (alternatively, this could be run as two 30-minute lessons).

Learning objectives

This lesson plan will enable teachers to support learners to:

- understand what ‘protected characteristics’ are and how they might affect learners who identify with any of the protected characteristics
- consider some of the portrayals of protected characteristics in the media and wider society and how this might impact on people
- understand the negative impacts of bullying in relation to protected characteristics
- consider what their school can do and what they can do as individuals to reduce bullying in relation to protected characteristics
- become more aware of the anti-bullying policy for the school
- support those who may have been bullied as well as those who bully
- know that there are protections in law with regard to bullying and hate crime
- know where to go for further information and support.

Other lesson plans

Welsh Government have also produced a series of five lesson plans and linked resources specifically on gender and transgender-based bullying. The lesson plans are designed for use at Key Stages 3 and 4. However, they contain information, resources and ideas that you may like to adapt for use at Key Stage 2. The series covers the following topics.

1. Understanding gender stereotyping.
2. Social norms relating to gender.
3. Understanding gender variance and transgender.
4. What does gender and transgender-based bullying look like and what protections are there?
5. What can we do about gender and transgender-based bullying?

Resources

- You will need to be able to show the film produced by Pontnewynydd Primary School, which can be accessed at the following link.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5Wot9paOcM

Note: The film needs to be played with sound.

Background and pre-reading

Respecting others: anti-bullying guidance

Before delivering this lesson, teachers should access and become familiar with the Welsh Government series of anti-bullying guidance called *Respecting others*. These documents provide guidance and practical solutions on preventing and responding to incidents of bullying in schools. The series includes a brief overview document and detailed guidance on the following five areas of bullying.

- Bullying around race, religion and culture.
- Bullying around special educational needs and disabilities.
- Cyberbullying.
- Homophobic bullying.
- Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying.

They can be accessed from:

www.gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/circulars/antibullying/?lang=en

The law

Preventing bullying and preventing the discrimination that can lead to bullying, abuse and violence are covered by a range of UK and Welsh legislation.

The **Education Act 2002** places a responsibility on education providers to tackle bullying in all its forms. All schools must have an anti-bullying policy, which sets out how they will:

- record bullying incidents
- investigate and deal with the incidents
- support victims
- discipline bullies.

The **Equality Act 2010** introduced the Public Sector Single Equality Duty. As part of this duty, all public bodies, including schools, have to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. It

focuses on anti-discrimination for nine ‘**protected characteristics**’. Schools have a duty under the Act to develop and publish equality objectives and a strategic equality plan, to enable the delivery of measurable equality outcomes that will improve the lives of individuals and communities.

Protected characteristics

The nine protected characteristics are:

- **age** – this refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32-year-olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 to 30-year-olds)
- **disability** – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- **gender reassignment** – the process of transitioning from one gender to another
- **marriage and civil partnership** – in Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as ‘civil partnerships’. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act)
- **pregnancy and maternity** – pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding
- **race** – refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins
- **religion and belief** – religion is a collective term for a diverse range of beliefs, practices and institutions. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition
- **sex** – a man or a woman
- **sexual orientation** – whether a person’s sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

(From The Equality and Human Rights Commission:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/guidance-all/protected-characteristics)

Estyn report on bullying on the grounds of protected characteristics

In 2013–14 the Welsh Government commissioned Estyn, as part of its remit, to review the effectiveness of action taken by schools to address bullying on the grounds of pupils' protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

In June 2014, Estyn published its report which found that many of the schools' strategic equality plans do not pay enough attention to the full range of protected characteristics. Of the 21 schools which took part in the survey, only a few identified 'reducing bullying on the grounds of the protected characteristics' as one of their equality objectives. In the report of this review, published in June 2014, Estyn noted that where there is a strong ethos in schools that promote equality and diversity, pupils report lower instances of bullying.

The report can be accessed from:

www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/action-bullying-june-2014

Anti-bullying film competition

In October 2014, the Minister for Education and Skills launched an anti-bullying film competition for primary and secondary schools in Wales. Schools were invited to come up with an idea for a video in English or Welsh of no more than two minutes in length which carried an anti-bullying message. The theme of the film was bullying on the grounds of learners' protected characteristics. The competition consisted of two categories – primary schools and secondary schools. The winning entries have been made into two separate films which has involved the learners in both schools in the production process. This lesson plan incorporates the winning primary school film.

Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents: A Framework for Action

The *Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents: A Framework for Action* document has been developed to tackle areas of hate crime and incidents of cyber-hate, and bullying in schools and the wider community. It also seeks to tackle the befriending of people who are perceived by perpetrators to be vulnerable, for the purposes of taking advantage of, exploiting and/or abusing them.

The framework includes three objectives on prevention, supporting victims and improving the multi-agency response. It is supported by a delivery plan which is updated every year. More detail can be accessed from:

wales.gov.uk/topics/equality/rightsequality/hate-crime/?lang=en

Defining and discussing bullying

Definition of bullying

Throughout this lesson plan, bullying is defined as set out in *Respecting others: Anti-bullying overview* (Welsh Government, 2011) as summarised here.

There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- repeated often over a period of time, while recognising that even a one-off incident can leave a learner traumatised and nervous of future recurrence
- difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

Individual learners' perspectives on what constitutes bullying are also a key element to take into account. Bullying can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, sexual harassment or aggression
- verbal – name-calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones.

Discussing bullying issues in the classroom

Bullying is a potentially sensitive topic. However, addressing it through age-appropriate discussions can help foster a more respectful environment in the classroom and in the school, with the overall aim being to help ensure all learners' right to a safe and supportive learning environment. The activities are meant to assist learners to understand the importance of respect for all people and the acceptance of diversity. You do not need to be an expert on these issues to deliver the lesson plans. Your main role is to facilitate an open discussion, respectful of diverse opinions. The following points should help you to do this.

Facilitating a discussion

It is important to create a safe, accepting and supportive environment to maximise sharing and learning, especially when learners are asked to talk about sensitive topics. A helpful practice is to set up ground rules or class rules. These rules help learners understand from the start what behaviour is expected of them. Encourage learners to develop their own rules to create a sense of ownership then post the rules in a prominent place so everyone can refer to them when needed.

Examples of ground rules

- We value and respect one another's questions and opinions.
- We do not talk about personal matters discussed in class with people outside the classroom, that is, we keep personal matters confidential.
- We do not interrupt one another.
- We do not put down or criticise other people in class.
- We have a right to pass if we do not want to answer a question.
- We can choose not to do an activity if we are uncomfortable with it.
- If we do not want to ask a question in front of everyone, we can ask it anonymously to the teacher (e.g. through a question drop box).

Classroom activities

Activity 1: How would it feel? (10 minutes)

- Watch the short film produced by Pontnewynydd Primary School.
- First, ask them what words they heard in the film ('idiot', 'lazy', 'dumb', 'different', 'stupid', 'weirdo'), then ask them to think about, but not necessarily share, if they have heard these words used in school or if they have used them themselves.
- Next, as individuals or in small groups, give learners sticky notes and ask them to write down (one word per note) words that they think describe how the girl in the film might feel when she has been called the names used in the film. (Alternatively, you might pre-prepare a list of words for them to choose from.)
- Ask them to stick the words up in a selected part of the room. You may choose to use a picture of a child for them to stick their words onto – or if the film has been projected onto a suitable surface, learners could stick them onto a paused image from the film itself.
- Have a look at and discuss the words they have come up with. Move the sticky notes around so that words that are the same or mean the same thing are grouped together. You might choose to discuss the following.
 - What words are the most common words used?
 - Are there any words used less commonly?
 - Why do they think that is so?
 - Do they understand all of the words used?
- Tell learners that the film won a competition run by the Welsh Government to come up with a film about bullying based on 'protected characteristics'. Lead into the next activity that will explore what we mean by 'protected characteristics'.

Discussion 1: The law and protected characteristics (5 minutes)

- As a whole group, ask learners if they think that the law gives individuals any protection against bullying.
- Explain to them that the law gives individuals protection against bullying and that there are special protections for some people who might need extra protection. These are known as 'protected characteristics'.
- Ask learners if they can think what the nine 'protected characteristics' might be. Start them off by giving them one or two. List their answers where everyone can see them.
- See if they can come up with all nine – if not fill in any that are missing.
- Explain and as necessary discuss any of the characteristics they are less familiar with.
- Ask which of the protected characteristics were covered by the film.

- Linking back to the last activity, ask which of the characteristics do they think would be easy to see when they first met someone. Which would not be obvious? Link this to the message in the film that ‘not all disabilities are visible’.

Activity 2: Different but equal (15 minutes)¹

- One topic at a time, ask learners to find and stand in groups according to the following characteristics. (You can adjust the list and add to it to suit your group.)
 - Born in the same month.
 - Have the same hair length (e.g. long, short and medium).
 - Height (e.g. tall, short, medium).
 - How they get to school (e.g. walk, bike, car, bus, etc.).
 - How many brothers and sisters they have (1, 2, 3, 4 or more).
 - Eye colour.
 - Their favourite animal, colour, television programme, sport, etc.
- Give them a moment or two within their group to talk about what they have in common under each characteristic on the list.
- Now consider the following questions in discussion with the whole group.
 - Were the same learners always in the same groups?
 - Were all the groups always equal in number?
 - Were there any groups with only one person in them? Did this make a difference? How? Why? How did it feel?
 - Did learners feel better when they were in a big group together? Why?
 - When was it possible to guess in advance which group people belonged to and when was it not possible?
 - Did any of the learners feel unhappy or uncomfortable at any time? Why? How could they have been made to feel better?
- Sum up the activity by making sure that learners understand that although we are different in many ways, we are all equal. Being different does not mean better or worse, just different. Explain that some groups might need special protection to make sure they are treated fairly and equally – these groups have ‘protected characteristics’.

Discussion 2: Positive and negative representations of protected characteristics (10 minutes)

- As a whole group, discuss examples of the way that people with protected characteristics are represented – both positive and negative examples.
- The examples might be an image, text or story, and might come from any source including magazines, newspapers, online blogs, social media,

¹ Activity 2 has been adapted from part of a lesson plan produced by Oxfam Education (© Copyright Oxfam GB). Materials can be reproduced for educational purposes only.
www.oxfam.org.uk/~media/Files/Education/Resources/Bullying/lesson3_different_but_equal.ashx

television/radio/online news, television programmes, films, music lyrics, music videos, computer games, etc. Examples might also be from real people that they know.

- You will need to make sure that you have examples to suggest if learners struggle to come up with their own examples. Try to make sure that the examples are **as up-to-date and relevant to your particular group as possible** (this is why examples have not been suggested for you). For example, has there been a recent story line on a TV programme? Has there been an issue in the news? Is there a song or video that is currently popular? Is there an example about a real person that most of them know – either a celebrity or a local example (especially a positive local example)? It may be more difficult to find examples for some of the protected characteristics so pay particular attention to these when gathering your examples in advance and ensure that you have plenty of positive examples.
- Alternatively, you could pre-select three or four examples and present the image or text to the class and ask them to discuss it and decide if it is a positive or negative example and why.
- Once you have discussed a selection of examples, discuss the following.
 - How might the negative examples make bullying related to protected characteristics more likely?
 - How might the positive examples make bullying related to protected characteristics less likely?

Activity 3: What can I do? (10 minutes)

- Firstly, discuss what they think about the boy in the film who chose to help the girl who was being bullied. Ask learners what they think about his actions. Was he brave? Would they do it? How can we encourage more people to be like him and help those who are being bullied?
- Next, ask learners to either:
 - write a text message that you could send to the girl in the film who was being bullied to show that you support her**or**
 - write a short blog or diary extract as though you are the girl in the film, explaining what you wish other children would do to support you.

Summing up and ending (5 minutes)

- Ask each learner to think about two things they have learnt in the lesson and ask a few to share their points.
- Either provide learners with a handout giving sources of advice and support or produce a poster to display in the classroom. A range of sources of advice and support for both learners and teachers is provided in the appendix. **Select the sources that you feel are most suitable for your learners and add any specifically local contacts and information, such as in-school mentors or counselling.**

Appendix: Sources of information and advice

Please note: This list of information is not comprehensive and while many of the links and sources are to nationally recognised organisations, inclusion here does not imply endorsement or recommendation by Welsh Government. All links and sources of information should be checked to ensure they are suitable and up-to-date before sharing with learners.

Helplines

Childline

Is the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people. They offer advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day.

Call: **0800 1111**

www.childline.org.uk

EACH

Has a freephone action line for children experiencing homophobic bullying. It's open Monday to Friday 10am–5pm.

Call: **0808 1000 143**

www.each.education

Websites

Anti-Bullying Alliance

Is a coalition of organisations and individuals working together to stop bullying and create safe environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Anti-Bullying pro

Supports people to take a stand against bullying and train anti-bullying ambassadors.

www.antibullyingpro.com/young-people

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

Has a website for children and young people, and parents and carers about staying safe online, called '**Think You Know**'.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Childline

They have a special page for bullying issues that includes a video about building up your confidence after bullying.

www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/Bullyinginfo.aspx

Directgov

Has information for young people on cyberbullying, bullying on social networks, internet and e-mail bullying, bullying on mobile phones, bullying at school, what to do about bullying, and information and advice for people who are bullying others and want to stop.

www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/the-law

Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES)

Provides information for trans people, their families and the professionals who care for them.

www.gires.org.uk

Kidscape

Provides advice and help about bullying for parents/carers, young people and professionals.

www.kidscape.org.uk

Meic

This is the Welsh Government's funded bilingual national advocacy service for children and young people in Wales.

www.meiccymru.org

Mermaids

Exists to offer family support for children and teenagers with gender-identity issues.

www.mermaidsuk.org.uk

NSPCC bullying and cyberbullying site

Provides a selection of child protection research, leaflets, guidance, evaluations and safeguarding resources on bullying and cyberbullying.

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/research-and-resources

Show racism the red card

This is a campaign that uses top footballers to educate against racism.

www.srtrc.org

Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L.)

Call: **0800 132 737** or text 'help' to 81066

Offers emotional support and information/literature to anyone concerned about their own mental health or that of a relative or friend. The helpline offers a confidential listening and support service.

<http://callhelpline.org.uk/default.asp#sthash.qA1ttfej.dpuf>